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Workforce Census Will Help Determine MTA Employee Diversity

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(April 13, 2004) A high proportion – about 83 percent – of MTA employees are members of a minority group.

It's an attribute the agency has monitored closely over the years as a matter of MTA policy and to comply with federal affirmative action laws. The laws require the agency's employee population to mirror the population of the area it serves.

Now it's time, says MTA's Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department (DEOD), to do another headcount.

Beginning Thursday, April 15, the department will distribute a short survey called the 2004 Workforce Census. It is intended to cover all 9,973 employees, including full- and part-timers, as-needed employees and interns.

"We're asking everyone to stand up and be counted in the Workforce Census," says Lucille Coleman, EEO programs manager for DEOD.

Affirmative Action Plan

Information from the census of MTA employees will be incorporated into the agency's 2004 Affirmative Action Plan. The Plan will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation for approval.

Some will complete the Workforce Census on-line; others will fill out a paper form to be distributed by 70 work location coordinators. Completed forms are to be dropped into a locked "ballot box" or handed back to the coordinators.

The census officially ends April 23, but DEOD will continue to accept both on-line surveys and completed paper forms for another two weeks to accommodate employees who were off work during the census period.

The survey gives employees an opportunity to indicate their ethnicity and racial category. The categories have been expanded to match the federal Year 2000 census.

PHOTO BY BILL HEARD



Ready with a "ballot box" for the Workforce Census are Lucille Coleman, center, and, from left, Jay Fisgus and Linda Wright of the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department, HR Director Stefan Chasnov and Cynthia Shavers of Organizational Development and Training.

Where there previously were five racial groups to select from – Caucasian, African American, Asian, American Indian and Pacific Islander – there now are nine choices, as well as a category for “other.”

Nine ethnic categories

The new categories, in order of appearance on the census form, are American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, African American (Black), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Caucasian (White), American Indian or Alaska Native and Black, American Indian or Alaska Native and White; Asian and White, Asian and Black, or Other.

Employees also will be asked to enter their badge number, indicate gender, sign and date the census form.

Because DEOD is seeking 100 percent response to get an accurate analysis of MTA employee population, “we ask that you sign your name,” says Coleman. “This is to help us determine who has not responded.”

The Workforce Census is important as a means of illustrating MTA’s commitment to and compliance with federal affirmative action regulations covering fairness in hiring practices.

“This (census),” says Coleman, “will establish a new baseline of information about MTA’s diversity.”

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